

**Department of Transportation
Project No. 53-175
Rehabilitation of the Putnam Bridge
Glastonbury/Wethersfield**

**June 21, 2011, 7:00 p.m.
Riverfront Community Center, Glastonbury**

Minutes

Present:

CTDOT Scott A. Hill, Manager of Bridges and Facilities
 Julie F. Georges, Principal Engineer Bridge Consultant Design
 Timothy D. Fields, Project Manager, Bridge Consultant Design
 Robert P. Brown, Project Engineer, Bridge Consultant Design
 Kim Lesay, Transp. Supervising Planner, Environmental Planning
 David Lavado, District Engineer, District 1 Construction

CTDEP Micheal Grzywinski

Close, Jensen & Miller:
 John Miller II, Project Manager
 Thomas Ryan, Chief Structural Engineer

Connecticut State Legislature;
 Honorable Prasad Srinivasan, State Representative, 31st District
 Honorable Jason Rojas, State Representative, 9th District

Town of Glastonbury:
 Richard Johnson, Town Manager

Town of Wethersfield:
 Michael Turner, Director of Public Works

The meeting was attended by approximately 15 members of the general public.

Presentation:

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. Mr. Tim Fields of CTDOT presented opening statements, introductions, and provided background and context for the proposed project. He noted that this project is a follow-up project to address required bridge repairs that are well beyond what could be addressed in the 2010-2011 emergency declaration Project 53-183.

Mr. Tom Ryan of Close, Jensen and Miller, the consultant engineering firm, tasked with development of bridge rehabilitation plans, gave a technical presentation using powerpoint to illustrate the existing bridge conditions and the proposed bridge rehabilitation repair and improvements. Mr. Ryan also discussed, illustrating through powerpoint slides, proposed detours that would be used for an estimated 10 weekend directional closures, 5 in each direction. He noted that the directional closures would be necessary for the proposed deck expansion joint installation and structural steel repair to the bridge floorbeams. Mr. Ryan also noted that the Department would investigate the feasibility of doing all required directional closures in the southbound direction by shifting traffic on the bridge, noting that the southbound directional detours on the previous deck repair project in 2008 appeared to create less backup than the northbound detours. Mr. Ryan also added that a feasibility investigation into the possible use of movable concrete barrier would be done. If shown to be cost effective, it may have the potential to significantly reduce the number of required directional closures of the bridge by shifting traffic on the bridge and providing one travel lane each direction during weekends when directional closures would otherwise have been required.

Public Comments and Questions: Multiple questions and comments from the public focused on the lack of pedestrian/bicycle access on the bridge and many strongly urged the Department to consider some means to add a sidewalk/bikeway to the bridge. Several commented that there is no pedestrian/bicycle access across the river, between Hartford and Middletown, except for the Rocky Hill Ferry that operates on a limited and seasonal schedule. Three individuals representing Glastonbury Bikeways commented that this bridge project should include provisions for pedestrian and bicyclist crossing over the river.

Regarding the sidewalk/bikeway recommendations, the Department responded that it was aware of this concern, and that while the scope of work for this bridge rehabilitation project did not include this consideration, the Department would initiate an additional feasibility study to determine sidewalk/bikeway width that could be added to the bridge and the approximate costs. It was anticipated the structurally feasible sidewalk/bicycle width may be very narrow in the range of 5 to 6 feet, may cost in the range of 8 to 10 million dollars, and may only be suitable for pedestrians. The Department also noted that while potential pedestrian/bicyclist access is under investigation, there are a number of hurdles, particularly in regard to the approaches, and that this would require strong commitment from the affected communities. The Department added that meetings would be held with the stakeholder groups in the future as more information becomes available during the investigation of a potential sidewalk/bikeway bridge enhancement,

One individual commented that the cost of adding pedestrian and bicycle access to the bridge was not worth the millions of dollars it would cost. He added that the cost of the approaches would also be very expensive, especially on the mile long Glastonbury side where additional bridging would be needed over the Keeney Cove. The individual added further that maintenance cost for winter snow removal on pedestrian/bicycle access on the bridge and the approaches would also be difficult and costly. The individual questioned how the Department could justify spending so much money on something he believed so few would be using when funding is so limited.

One questioner asked if the Department would schedule a follow-up informational meeting after the completion of the sidewalk/bikeway feasibility study and if so when that might be. The Department responded that a stakeholder group process would be initiated to follow up on the pedestrian/bicycle access concerns and it was determined subsequent to the meeting that additional public meeting(s) would be held if required.

Concerns about the maintenance of traffic in the area were brought up. These were focused on impacts associated with the Putnam Bridge and the Arrigoni Bridge in Portland being under construction simultaneously and having reduced capacities. The Department responded that there would not be any construction activities on the Putnam Bridge, which would affect traffic until the traffic was fully restored on the Arrigoni Bridge, now scheduled for completion in November 2012. It was noted that work from below the Putnam Bridge, such as bearing replacements, could take place in the early part of the project prior to the completion of the Arrigoni Bridge project as that work will not affect travel lanes on the Putnam Bridge.

One questioner asked whether the Department had considered using the Rocky Hill Ferry with expanded schedule as an alternate detour route during directional bridge closures. The Department responded that it had not done so.

A representative from the Town of Wethersfield reiterated a request previously made to the Department that the bridge design provide architectural luminaires and that a feasibility study on special opening highway median barrier gates that would allow traffic to cross the median during emergency traffic operations be undertaken. The Department responded that it would consider both requests.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15pm.